

LESSON 5

ZWINGLI AND THE RISE OF THE ANABAPTISTS

Introduction

The preaching of Zwingli and particularly that of Leo Jud provoked an outburst of iconoclasm. Once again some of Zwingli's more activist followers began to act out his opposition to certain Roman Catholic practices. Doubtless his experience as chaplain of the Shrine of the Black Virgin had awakened deep within him an aversion to the pagan and superstitious use made of images. The less cautious Leo Jud took the matter one step further and invited his hearers to take matters into their own hands, which they did. A number of images and paintings were seized and destroyed. St. Peter's Church, Jud's own parish church, was one of those vandalized. Niklaus Hottinger and Lorenz Hochrutiner were arrested and reprimanded for their part in removing the crucifix over the Niederdorf gate. However, sentencing of the culprits was withheld until a disputation could be held concerning the teaching of the Old and New Testaments regarding images and the Mass. The Second Disputation was scheduled for October 26-28.

While the crisis had been precipitated by the outburst of iconoclasm (attacks on images, crucifixes, and paintings), another issue, the Mass, was quite as pressing among some of Zwingli's most ardent disciples. These were those who had been attending the prophecy meetings. Among them were Conrad Grebel, the son of Jacob Grebel, a Hapsburg, and member of the city council, and Felix Manz, the son of a former provost of the Grossmünster. As it turned out, the discussion on the Mass was far more explosive than that on images.

The Second Disputation: October 26-28, 1523

The first day

When October 26, 1523 dawned hundreds of men made their way to the *Rathaus*. In addition to the two city councils and more than five hundred priests in attendance, there were also present ten men with earned doctorates. The assembly was virtually unanimous in the condemnation of images. Their use was declared an abomination in the sight of God and repeatedly condemned by one speaker after the other. Dr. Balthasar Hübmaier from Waldshut spoke out eloquently against images, emphasizing that Scripture alone provided the standard of judgement. "With reference to the Second and Fifth Book of Moses, he declared that God had forbidden the making of idols and their worship and had therefore commanded that they should be burned."¹

¹ Torsten Bergsten, *Balthasar Hübmaier: Anabaptist Theologian and Martyr*, ed. W. R. Estep (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1978), p. 83.

The preaching of _____ and Leo Jud provoked an outburst of _____

(Zwingli, iconoclasm)

Is the following statement true or false?

The discussion on the Mass was more explosive than that on images. _____

(true)

Hundreds of men went to the _____ on October 26, _____

(Rathaus, 1523)

The second day

By the end of the first day, no one had risen to defend the continued use of images. Hence, the second day the disputation moved on to a consideration of the Mass. During the day the Mass was also described as an abomination in the sight of God. Its idolatrous aspects were roundly denounced by various speakers. At the close of the second day, the burgomaster suggested that since the Mass had been thoroughly discussed, he was prepared to adjourn, if "my lords" agreed. He then proceeded to announce that they would assemble again the next day at noon for a discussion of purgatory.

Clearly disappointed that no instructions had been forthcoming for the abolition of that which was such an abomination, Conrad Grebel "stood up and expressed the opinion that since the priests were all present that day they should be instructed regarding the mass so that from this time on the mass would be dispensed with. If this were not done the disputation would be in vain. While it was true that much had been said about the mass up to that point, no one was willing to forsake this great abomination before God. Also, there were still many more serious abuses in the mass about which one must speak."

Zwingli replied, "My Lords (the Zürich City Council) will decide what measures are to be taken from this point on regarding changes in the mass." Then Simon Stumpf stood up and said, "Master Ulrich, this power is not in your hands to turn over to my Lords, for that decision has already been made. The Spirit of God decides. So, if my Lords arrive at some other decision that is against the judgement of God, I will ask Christ for His Spirit and will teach and act against it."

Zwingli answered, "That is right. I will also preach and act against it, if they render another decision. I do not deliver that judgement into their hands. They are not to sit in judgement over God's Word and that goes not only for them but also for the whole world. Also, this assembly is not called to decide what they should do, but to determine in the light of Scripture whether the mass is a sacrifice for sins or not. So, later on the members of the council will determine what measures will be taken concerning these matters."

At the close of this rather sharp exchange, the burgomaster stood to his feet once again to announce the continuation of the disputation the next day.

The third day

The following day the burgomaster opened the session with a continuation of a discussion of the Mass. Apparently, an agreement had been reached the previous evening between Zwingli, Vadian, Hübmaier, and Grebel to continue the previous day's discussion before proceeding on to a consideration of purgatory as previously announced. Apparently, the assem-

On the second day, the disputation considered the

(Mass)

Grebel was

(disappointed)

bly never got around to purgatory. It was probably pretty much of a dead issue, which was certainly not true of the Mass.

Grebel was the first to speak, according to the minutes taken by Ludwig Haetzer. Grebel pointed out that there were many more abuses in the Mass than had been brought out in the discussion the day before. He was followed by Hübmaier who delivered a carefully thought-out five point sermon on the Mass, revealing in the process his basic agreement with Zwingli. Among these was a call for the celebration of the Mass in the language of the people, not in Latin: "Without a doubt Christ did not speak *calecutisch* (gibberish) with his disciples when he instituted the Lord's Supper, but used language which was clear and understandable." He insisted that when Mass is observed the gospel must be preached for "he who does not preach the Word of God does not truly celebrate mass." He also suggested that the Scriptures know nothing of private masses, but teach that its observance is an act of communal fellowship in the company of believers. He implied that both bread and wine are to be taken by all the brethren. He claimed to have had misgivings about other abuses of the Mass such as those suggested by Grebel for an entire year. Characteristically, Hübmaier qualified his statements with, "I may err, I am a man; but a heretic I cannot be. I will (and desire from the heart) receive correction and give many thanks to those who make known my error for I will follow God's Word willingly. . . ."

The next speaker was Zwingli who joined in the condemnation of other abuses connected with the Mass. He closed his remarks by making a strong appeal for a careful study of the Scriptures. But Grebel had not had his say. For a short time the disputation became little more than a dialogue between Grebel and Zwingli. From the minutes, Grebel appeared to take the offensive and Zwingli the defensive. At times Zwingli agreed with Grebel. But more often than not he claimed that one could not be sure about the details of the Last Supper instituted by Christ. In such cases where the Bible is not clear, Zwingli said the parish church must determine how and under what circumstances the Lord's Supper should be observed. Finally, Zwingli expressed the desire "that my Lords will permit the scandal of the mass to come to an end in an orderly manner, maintaining peace."

Zwingli doubtless knew that in such a company he must walk carefully. There were present defenders of Rome ready to spring to the attack. The half-convinced were reluctant to give up such a time-honoured practice so quickly. It is clear that Grebel and Stumpf represented a vigorous and aggressive attitude that desired action where the teaching of the Scriptures was so abundantly clear. The tension was growing. No one could know for sure how many shared divergent viewpoints. Towards the close of the day Zwingli spoke again, this time clearly agitated. With deep earnestness he pleaded with the assembly not to hesitate to learn from God's Word. Haetzer adds that he spoke with such strong feelings for Christian unity that Zwingli himself began to weep and many others with him. After the leaders had gained their composure, the disputation was brought to a close.

List points concerning the Mass made by Hübmaier.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Grebel had not had his _____

(say)

Zwingli knew he must _____

(walk, carefully)

The free church movement

The disappointment that Grebel expressed at the end of the second day increased during the weeks that followed. On December 8, the minutes of the disputation were published and new popular outbursts against the Mass and images followed. The demonstrations produced no change of mind and heart on the part of the city council, and by December 19, Zwingli bowed to the authority, if not the judgement of the council. He abandoned his earlier plans to observe the Lord's Supper in a simple apostolic manner on Christmas day. In the eyes of the Grebel circle, the authority of the Word of God had been sacrificed upon the altar of human expediency. The youthful disciples felt themselves to have been betrayed.

Harold Bender detects in the break between Zwingli and his critics the beginning of the free church movement which was the first attempt within the Reformation of establishing a church without state cooperation or support, "The decision of Conrad Grebel to refuse to accept the jurisdiction of the Zürich council over the Zürich church is one of the high moments of history, for however obscure it was, it marked the beginning of the modern 'free church movement.' "

Is the following statement true or false?

The free church movement attempted to wed Church and State. _____

(false)

Dialogue and Estrangement: 1524

Whether the disagreements which surfaced during the Second Disputation reflected a break between Zwingli and his students remains a matter of debate. However, there is no question that by the end of December, estrangement had set in. The group of dissidents was small, numbering no more than seven. Before alienation appeared permanent, Stumpf, Manz, and Grebel attempted to persuade Zwingli and Leo Jud to adopt a more biblical programme of reform, but without success. Instead, both sides hardened. Hopes of reconciliation or compromise faded. Grebel and Manz emerged as leaders in what now became a conventicle for worship and serious Bible study. A frequent meeting place was the home of Manz and his mother located in *Neustadt Gasse* just in back of the Grossmünster.

Thomas Müntzer

Increasingly isolated by the Zürich establishment, Grebel on the behalf of the group began to cast around for support, writing Luther, Müntzer, and Carlstadt. Only the letter to Müntzer survives. However, from its contents, the reader can readily learn the direction in which the Zürich radicals were moving in late September 1524.

Thomas Müntzer was a follower of Luther who championed the cause of the German peasants in their attempt to achieve certain rights in the midst of an increasingly oppressive society. However, Müntzer too readily identified the peasants and their cause with the Kingdom of God and that of the princes with the ungodly. According to his scheme of things, the return of Christ was drawing near. In preparation for this climactic

The cause of the German peasants was championed by _____

(Thomas, Müntzer)

event, he called upon the peasants to lay bare the sword against the godless and thus prepare the way for the return of Christ and His millennial Kingdom

Early in his ministry he was closely associated with Nicholas Storch of Zwickau. Like the Zwickau Prophets he held that the direct revelation of the Holy Spirit was superior to any other authority, even that of Scripture. And, at one time he appears to have questioned the validity of infant baptism. However, there is no evidence that either he or the Zwickau Prophets baptized believers or attempted to form churches of committed disciples baptized upon a profession of faith.

The letter to Müntzer

The Zürich radicals had read some of his earlier works and heard rumors concerning his fiery preaching. Their letter of inquiry was written in hopes of gaining an ally once they had informed him of their strong convictions. However, they ended up by doing more telling than asking. This letter and its postscript clearly demonstrated their independence from Müntzer.

After setting forth the historical context of their separation from Zwingli, they expressed joy over what they had heard concerning Müntzer's preaching:

While we were taking note of and lamenting these things your writing against spurious faith and baptism was brought to us, and we were more fully informed and confirmed. It made us wonderfully happy to have found one who was one with us in a common Christian understanding, and who ventured to point out to the evangelical preachers their deficiency.

Just to be sure Müntzer understood their position, they proceeded to offer him some advice.

We therefore entreat and admonish you as a brother, by the name, power, Word, Spirit, and salvation which all Christians receive through Jesus Christ our Master and Savior, to seek earnestly to preach only the divine Word, and unafraid, to set up and defend only divine rites, to esteem as right and good only what is found in crystal-clear Scripture, to reject, hate, and curse all proposals, words, rites, and opinions of all men, even your own.

Applying the principle just enunciated, Grebel attacked singing which he and his colleagues, at this stage, ruled out as unscriptural, even in German. However, the Mass came in for the severest criticism. Grebel's delineation of the elements in the restoration of the Lord's Supper has a familiar ring, an echo of the points he and others attempted to score in the Second Disputation. Following Zwingli's understanding of the symbolism of the observance, he wrote: "Although it is simply bread, where faith and brotherly love prevail it shall be partaken of with joy. When observed in that way in the congregation it shall signify to us that we are truly one loaf and one body, and that we are one and intend to be true brothers one with another." Further Grebel wrote: "The Supper. . . is to be a sign of unity. It is not a mass or a sacrament. Therefore no one shall receive it alone, neither on a deathbed nor otherwise." Grebel went on to spell out in the most minute detail how the Mass ought to be observed.

Their letter was written in hopes of gaining an

(ally)

The Zürich radicals offered Müntzer

(advice)

From a discussion of the Mass the letter shifted once again to the possibility that Müntzer was not as genuine as his well-wishers might like. The Swiss suggested that if Müntzer was still receiving benefices that he should cease. They also expressed their sorrow and disappointment over the recent rumor that he had erected tablets of stone to call his congregation back to the law of God. Their fear was that such action will result in a return to idolatrous worship. They had been misinformed regarding Müntzer's teachings on the sword. In the first letter they assumed that he subscribed to a thorough-going pacifism that rejected any use of the sword even in matters of defence. In the postscript, which is actually a second letter, they denounced in no uncertain terms Müntzer's call to arms against the nobility. The apparent arrogance of such youthful zealots would be difficult to explain and even more difficult to accept, if it were not for their utter sincerity that rejected any practice in the life of the Church not rooted and grounded in the Bible.

In spite of their obvious misgivings regarding what they had read and heard of Müntzer's programme of reform, that which thrust them forward with offers of friendship was Müntzer's teaching on baptism. Here they felt they were on common ground. In this regard they were absolutely certain of their grounds. On the basis of Scripture they rejected infant baptism. "From the above Scriptures which alone apply to the whole subject of children, and all other Scriptures (demanding faith) do not apply to children, we conclude that infant baptism is a senseless, blasphemous abomination, contrary to all Scripture."

A separatist movement

The estrangement between Zwingli and his former disciples, which had begun in a disagreement over who had the authority to abolish the Mass and establish the Lord's Supper in its place, had by September 5, 1524, developed into a full-fledged separatist movement affecting the nature of the Church, baptism, and Christian discipleship. However, they had not yet reached the point of no return. Others had gone as far before their day. But with the inauguration of believer's baptism and the formation of a church upon the principle of voluntary decision they went much further than their medieval predecessors.

The Birth of Anabaptism

As births always are, this one was preceded by months of gestation and the pain of travail. Since September, Zwingli and Leo Jud had attempted to refute the arguments advanced by Grebel, Manz, and others without success. Fearing schism, Zwingli prodded the council into calling a third disputation. This debate like the others was held in the *Rathaus* (Council Hall). Unlike the others, however, it was designed to put down what Zwingli was viewing more and more as rebellion.

The Third Disputation was convened on January 17, 1525 to consider one question, believer's baptism, now so fervently advocated by the radicals as the only valid baptism. Grebel,

List the misgivings about Müntzer held by the Zürich radicals.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Friendship was extended to Müntzer because of his teaching on _____.

(baptism)

Is the following statement true or false?

The inauguration of believer's baptism and the formation of a church upon the principle of voluntary decision led to a separatist movement. _____

(true)

The Third Disputation was called to put down what Zwingli regarded as _____.

(rebellion)

Manz, and Blaurock argued for their cause with frequent reference to the New Testament. But they made no headway with Zwingli or the city council. Zwingli's torrent of words and spurious arguments overwhelmed his opponents and influenced the council, over which he continued to exert enormous influence. The outcome was a foregone conclusion. Zwingli was declared victor and the cause of those soon to be dubbed "Anabaptists," lost. The next day, January 18, the first of two mandates, designed to suppress the movement, were handed down by the council. The second followed on January 21.

The dissidents were ordered to cease meeting together, to bring their unbaptized children for baptism, or in case of failure to comply, to leave the canton in eight days. The mandate of January 21 listed those leaders of the movement who were not citizens of the canton and who were to be banished in eight days. Among these were Wilhelm Reublin, pastor at Wytikon, the first of the Zürich clergy to take a wife, Johannes Brötli, an elderly "retired" priest at Zollikon, Ludwig Haetzer, brilliant Hebraist, and Andreas Castelberger, bookseller from Graubünden.

Even though Reublin was the first to raise the question concerning baptism among the Brethren, he was not the first to be baptized or to baptize. It was the night of January 21, 1525. The place was the home of Felix Manz and his mother. *The Large Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren* records the stirring events of that unforgettable night.

And it came to pass that they were together until anxiety (*angst*) came upon them, yes, they were so pressed within their hearts. Thereupon they began to bow their knees to the Most High (*hochstenn*) God in heaven and called upon him as the Informer of Hearts (*Hertzenkundiger*), and they prayed that he would give to them his divine (*göttlichen*) will and that he would show his mercy unto them. For flesh and blood and human forwardness did not drive them, since they well knew what they would have to suffer on account of it.

After the prayer, George of the House of Jacob stood up and besought (*gebeeten*) Conrad Grebel for God's sake to baptize him with the true (*recht*) Christian baptism upon his faith and knowledge (*erkenntnis*). And when he knelt down with such a request and desire, Conrad baptized him, since at that time there was no ordained minister (*diener*) to perform such work.²

After his baptism at the hands of Grebel, George Blaurock, a former priest from Chur, proceeded to baptize all the others present who then covenanted together as faithful disciples of Christ to live lives separated from the world, teach the gospel, and hold the faith.

Anabaptism was born. With this first baptism, the earliest church of the Swiss Brethren was constituted. This was clearly the most revolutionary act of the Reformation. No other event so completely symbolized the break with Rome. Here, for the first time in the course of the Reformation, a group of Christians dared to form a church after what was conceived to be the New Testament pattern. The Brethren emphasized the absolute necessity of a personal commitment to Christ as essential to salvation and a prerequisite to baptism.

² See W. R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963), pp. 9-10.

State briefly the two mandates given against the Zürich radicals.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The first baptism among the Swiss Brethren was in the home of _____ on _____, 1525.

(Felix, Manz, January, 21)

Grebel baptized _____

(George, Blaurock)

No other event so completely symbolized the break with _____

(Rome)

Spreading the Faith

Baptism

Soon the little band, numbering possibly no more than twelve, separated to carry the work into the nearby communities. The first of these was Zollikon. The next day, Brötli baptized a number of converts at the village well (January 22). In the days which followed, a number of baptisms followed. For a brief period, Brötli, Hottinger, Manz, and Blaurock worked together in forming the first Anabaptist congregation. The revival was interrupted by the arrest of the leaders and imprisonment in the Wellenberg prison tower and the former Augustinian monastery. Thus a pattern was established: Presentation of the gospel, response, baptism, communion, new converts sharing their faith, arrest, imprisonment, suppression.

The first baptism of the Swiss Brethren was by pouring. Even though the early leaders doubtless knew that the Greek word *baptizein*, translated "to baptize," meant to immerse, they probably did not consider immersion a live option. For one thing, smarting under the harsh mandate of the Zürich City Council, they had gone to the Felix Manz home primarily to pray and seek divine direction in the crisis with which they were faced. The possibility of baptism may have been in the back of their minds. However, it is one thing to embrace a concept of the Church which called for believer's baptism but quite another to practise it. When the impetuous Blaurock asked for baptism at the hands of Grebel, apparently no one thought of "gathering at the river" a few hundred feet from where they were meeting. This was January and Januarys in Zürich are cold. Perhaps the Limmat was even frozen over. At any rate the major concern of the small band of bold pioneers that night was the formation of a church made up of committed disciples, baptized upon the basis of their confession of faith and voluntary decision to act out that commitment.

Immersion did become the form of baptism for the first time among the Brethren less than a month later when Conrad Grebel on the way to Shcaffhausen met and baptized Wolfgang Ulimann, a former monk. While Luther had attempted to reinaugurate the New Testament form by immersing his first-born son, Hans, he did not continue the practice. As early as 1520, Luther had arrived at this conviction as indicated by a typical passage as follows:

From this (reference is to Eph. 2:8) we can clearly see the difference in baptism between man who administers the sacrament and God who is the author. For man baptizes, and yet does not baptize. He baptizes in that he performs the work of immersing the person to be baptized; he does not baptize, because in so doing he is not on his own authority but acts in God's stead.

The case of Ulimann is an example of a convert clearly convinced that only the immersion of a believer in water constituted complete apostolic baptism. Grebel must have been in agreement since both undressed and went down into the icy waters of the Rhine where, according to a contemporary chron-

Name three things that formed the basis of the church formed by the Swiss Brethren.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Immersion became the form of _____ for the

(baptism, Swiss, Brethren)

icler, Grebel put him under the waters of the Rhine and covered him over.

It was Ulimann who returned to his native St. Gall and along with Gabriel Giger and Lorenz Hochrutiner began to sow the seed of Anabaptism. A revival broke out and he called for help. Manz and Grebel soon joined in the evangelistic effort. Within a few weeks hundreds responded and were baptized, not in the small stream that flowed through the city but in the Sitter River about three kilometers away. Due to the energetic efforts of the Zürich Anabaptists, Anabaptism was beginning to take root in a half a dozen towns and villages.

Manz and Grebel joined in the _____ effort.

(evangelistic)

Arrest and trial

Activity ground to a halt with the mass arrest of Anabaptists in and around Grüningen. Grüningen, the boyhood home of Grebel, northeast of Zürich became the scene of his earnest labours. Here he worked with extraordinary success from the end of June until his arrest on October 8, 1525. For the better part of the four months, Grebel visited from house to house, witnessing to one or two, or preaching to small groups. His messages emphasized the necessity of repentance and faith upon the authority of the Scriptures. The point of departure from the standing order always seemed to have been the issue of baptism. The Brethren from Zollikon, Chur, and Waldshut often worked together in an intensive effort to spread the gospel of Anabaptism. One such occasion took place on October 8. As Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock were preparing for a service in a nearby field, Grebel and Blaurock were arrested by Magistrate Berger and imprisoned in the castle at Grüningen. Three weeks later Manz, who had escaped the clutches of the magistrate on the eighth, was seized and incarcerated in the same prison.

After more than a month in confinement, the three ring leaders, Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock were finally brought to trial and sentenced to an indefinite term of imprisonment on November 18, 1525. They were condemned "because of their Anabaptism and their unbecoming conduct to lie in the tower on a diet of bread and water, and no one was permitted to visit them except the guards."

State why Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock were condemned.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The case against the Anabaptists was extremely weak. Upon rather dubious evidence, Zwingli accused the Brethren of sedition. Actually the charges were based upon perverted accounts of what the Brethren taught. Instead of denying the magistracy, as one Dr. Hofmeister had charged, Felix Manz stated his opinion: "No Christian could be a magistrate, nor could he use the sword to punish or to kill anyone, for he had no Scripture for such a thing."

The Brethren denied that they taught a community of goods as the Christian way of life, but insisted that a Christian ought to share with those who were in need. Manz and Grebel asserted that infant baptism was wrong and affirmed their conviction that believer's baptism was the sign of membership in the true church.

Others were imprisoned. And the Brethren who had at one time, along with Zwingli, even questioned the biblical support for singing in worship had second thoughts. Whether their

actions were based on a more complete understanding of Scriptures or simply reflected the irrepressible joy of the Christian faith in the midst of earthly tribulation is not known. What is clear is that the harshness of their imprisonment was relieved by the joy of their fellowship. Their days were full of praise and prayer, even though the provision for their physical needs was meagre.

It was ironic that Grebel now found himself imprisoned in the tower of the castle which he roamed at will as a small boy growing up in Grüningen. However, he did not languish away his days in reminiscing or self-pity. Instead, he produced a manuscript on baptism and even asked permission for its publication. Such exasperating audacity provoked an aggravated response. The rejection of his request could not have been unexpected since it came just after a second trial held on March 5 and 6, 1526. The following day, March 7, Grebel, Manz, Blaurock, and a number of others were sentenced to life in prison. On the same day the city council handed down a new mandate making the act of "rebaptism" a crime punishable by death. However, fourteen days later some unknown benefactor left the prison doors unlocked and the prisoners escaped.

Martyrdom

After five months in prison followed by five months as a fugitive, Grebel was dead. His numerous imprisonments and the hardships of a hunted heretic weakened an already frail body which could not stand the ravages of the plague. In a sense, his death in exile at Maienfeld was a martyr's death. However, Felix Manz became the first Anabaptist to actually die at the hands of Zürich authorities. Since the death of Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock had not slackened their pace. If anything it had quickened. Almost on the very anniversary of his arrest in Grüningen the year before, Manz was arrested in St. Gall on October 12, but soon released. However, he was arrested again in a Grüningen forest, this time with Blaurock. Two months later he was transferred to the Wellenberg prison in Zürich. From here he was taken to the site of his execution. On January 5, 1527, Felix Manz was sentenced to death,

because contrary to Christian order and custom he had become involved in Anabaptism, . . . because he confessed having said that he wanted to gather those who wanted to accept Christ and follow Him, and unite himself with them through baptism, . . . so that he and his followers separated themselves from the Christian Church and were about to raise up and prepare a sect of their own . . . because he had condemned capital punishment . . . since such doctrine is harmful to the unified usage of all Christendom, and leads to offense, insurrection, and sedition against the government, . . . Manz shall be delivered to the executioner, who shall tie his hands, put him into a boat, take him to the lower hut, there strip his bound hands down over his knees, place a stick between his knees and arms, and thus push him into the water and let him perish in the water; thereby he shall have atoned to the law and justice. . . . His property shall also be confiscated by my lords.

Manz, according to the sentence, was taken bound from the Wellenberg prison past the fish market to the boat. All along the way he witnessed to the members of the dismal procession and

The first to die at the hands of Zürich authorities was

(Felix Manz)

Underline the false statement.

to those standing on the banks of the Limmat River, praising God that even though a sinner he would die for the truth. Further he declared that believer's baptism was the true baptism according to the Word of God and the teachings of Christ. His mother's voice could be heard above the subdued throng and the ripple of the swift-flowing stream, entreating him to remain true to Christ in the hour of temptation. After the sentence was pronounced, he was placed into a boat just below the *Rathaus* (Council Hall) which moved downstream to a fish hut that was anchored in the middle of the Limmat. As his arms and legs were being bound, he sang out with a loud voice, "*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum*" (Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit). A few moments later the cold waters of the river closed in over the head of Felix Manz. According to the Zürich chronicler, Bernhard Wyss, Manz's execution took place on January 5, 1527, at 3 o'clock Saturday afternoon.

Manz became the first victim of Protestant intolerance. Unfortunately he was not the last. Before Zwingli himself met death on the battlefield of Kappel, other Anabaptists were executed by drowning in the Limmat at the same spot where Manz died. Wherever Anabaptism spread, persecution became the order of the day and martyrdom the hallmark of the suffering Church. The blood of the Martyrs once again became the seed of the Church.

From this time on persecution unto death became the handmaiden of the Anabaptist witness. As the movement spread from its Zürich-Zollikon cradle throughout German-speaking Europe, death stalked its way. Execution by drowning, the sword, and fire were the means used to suppress the movement. In Roman Catholic territories Anabaptists were most severely persecuted. In areas under Protestant influence they faced suppression with various degrees of severity. As a result, a mounting stream of refugees began to carry the message to new centres of activity. Claus-Peter Clasen holds that with the death of the more biblical and responsible leaders, the leadership of the movement fell into the hands of the unstable and untutored. Consequently, the movement in some areas lost its original vision and became captive to the fantasies of some unscrupulous men. This in turn led to further suppression and fragmentation. The final result was that from a movement which was never large, a small remnant survived into the seventeenth century. Among these were a few Swiss and South German Anabaptist churches, Hutterites in Moravia, and Mennonites of the Netherlands.

Before Zwingli met death on the battlefield on October 11, 1531, he had become an embittered enemy of the Anabaptists, who were formerly numbered among his colleagues and students. The shift was not only psychological; it was theological as well. What may have been a decision due primarily to political considerations to go along with the city council soon found support from Zwingli's appropriation of Augustine's teaching on predestination. For his new views he turned to the Old Testament in which he saw that circumcision was the Old Covenant's counterpart to the New Covenant's baptism of infants. Once fortified with that which appeared so biblical and plausible, he was intellectually fortified to do battle with his opponents.

Manz cowered in fear before his death.

Manz's mother urged him to remain true to Christ.

Manz's arms and legs were bound.

Manz drowned beneath the waters of the Limmat.

Manz's death occurred at 3 o'clock on Saturday afternoon on January 5, 1527.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The handmaiden of the Anabaptist witness was

(persecution)

Zwingli became an embittered enemy of the

(Anabaptists)

However in Zwingli's new theological formulation, there was no change in his view of the Lord's Supper. This remained the point at which he and his former disciples found themselves ideologically closest together. By the same token it was the issue that continued to separate him the furthest from Luther.

The Marburg Colloquy

In the Marburg Colloquy of 1529, Luther was the compromising reformer, not Zwingli. Early in his reformatory career Luther made significant departures from the accepted Roman Catholic theology of the Mass. The Mass for him no longer involved transubstantiation in which the words of consecration, *Hoc est corpus meum* (This is my body) and *Hic est sanguis meus* (This is my blood), triggered the changing of the bread into flesh and the wine into the blood of Christ. Rather he argued for men of faith the presence of Christ was in the bread and the wine which made it the real flesh and blood of Christ. Hence, he held as adamantly as the traditionalists to the "Real Presence" or corporal (bodily) presence of Christ.

Luther's doctrine, generally referred to as consubstantiation, was based upon a literal interpretation of the scriptural accounts of the Last Supper undergirded by a philosophical concept of the ubiquity of Christ. Since Christ is everywhere and in all things, to deny His presence in the elements is to deny the plain meaning of the words of Christ as well as the ubiquity of Christ. The miracle of transubstantiation, therefore, was taken out of the hands of the priests. The presence of Christ was for those who possessed the faith to realize it. Luther, however, denied that the Mass was a sacrifice for sin as taught by the Roman Church, but he maintained that in some sense it was a means of grace.

Zwingli was stimulated by the work of a certain Dutch theologian, Cornelius Hoen, who first called Zwingli's attention to the interpretation which he was to adapt after a careful study of the Scriptures and contemporary writing on the subject. Hoen had suggested that "This is my body" meant signifies. Zwingli concurred. Checking with Erasmus, Luther's writings on the subject and works of Carlstadt, he was convinced that this was the clear meaning of Scripture. Hence, Zwingli developed a symbolic view of the Lord's Supper, quite independent of Luther.

According to Zwingli the purpose of the Lord's Supper was to help the participant to call to mind the one sacrifice of Christ for our sins—it was not a repetition of the sacrifice. Christ was present only in a spiritual sense, for he had ascended bodily into heaven. To Zwingli it was nonsense to speak of the "Real Presence." The Lord's Supper was truly a Eucharist in which the believer gives thanks to God for the sacrifice of Christ. Thus Zwingli denied a literal understanding of the words as well as the bodily presence of Christ.

Philip of Hesse, longing for theological agreement in order to support a political and military alliance against the resurgent Roman Catholic forces, succeeded in bringing Luther and Zwingli together with a number of other theologians from both

For Luther, the Mass no longer involved

(transubstantiation)

Luther's doctrine is commonly known as

(consubstantiation)

Underline Zwingli's view of the Lord's Supper.

Since Christ is everywhere and in all things, to deny His presence in the elements is to deny the plain meaning of the words of Christ as well as the ubiquity of Christ.

"This is my body" meant signifies.

The words of consecration cause the bread to change into flesh and wine to become the blood of Christ.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

camps. In this case, it was easier to achieve their physical presence than their theological unity. The meeting has been called the Marburg Colloquy. Philip was astute enough not to allow Luther and Zwingli to face each other on the first day of discussions. Instead, Luther and Oecolampadius were assigned one room while Zwingli and Melancthon met in another.

The next morning, October 2, the actual debate began at six in the morning. Luther and Zwingli were face to face with each other for the first time. Perhaps as many as sixty people were present for this historic occasion. Before the debate began Luther had written on the table in chalk *Hoc est corpus meum* (This is my body). He was to insist upon the literal interpretation of these words. He refused to retreat from this position. Against Luther's interpretation, Zwingli, on the basis of John 6:63, argued these words were not to be accepted literally but only spiritually. Luther contended that Zwingli's text had nothing to do with the discussion in progress. "No, no," Zwingli retorted, "this will break your spine." "Do not brag too much," Luther replied. "Here, necks are not broken. You are in Hesse now, not in Switzerland." Zwingli apologized. However, the damage had been done. Not only would Luther not agree to Zwingli's interpretation, he refused the out-stretched hand of Christian brotherhood. The conference had reached a stalemate.

After some pleading by their host, Philip, who insisted that they should at least be able to arrive at some consensus of what constituted the Protestant faith, fifteen articles were drawn up and signed. The last article reflected a compromise which left each side free to disagree. It reads:

Although we have been unable to agree on the same issue as to whether the true vine and blood of Christ are corporally present in the bread and wine of the eucharist, nevertheless each party will prove towards the other its spirit of Christian love, in so far as his conscience will permit. Both will fervently pray to God Almighty that He may grant us and confirm us in true understanding of the matter.³

While the Anabaptists would always reflect the influence of Zwingli in the development of their own theology of the Lord's Supper, they made more of the spiritual presence than did Zwingli. They also emphasized that its observance was a communion of disciples in fellowship with their Lord and one another. In Anabaptist life discipline became very closely related to the Lord's Supper. The deeper theological cleavage between the Anabaptists and the Magisterial Reformation will be discussed in the next lesson.

The meeting between Luther and Zwingli has been called the _____.

(Marburg Colloquy)

Luther refused to retreat from his _____.

(position)

³ Jean Rilliet, *Zwingli: Third Man of the Reformation*, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 265.

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. Review the First Disputation discussed in the previous chapter and answer this question: What was the occasion and purpose of the Second Disputation? _____

2. Who was Conrad Grebel? What significant role did he play in the Second Disputation? _____

3. What is the free church movement? What role did Grebel play in its beginning? _____

4. Who was Thomas Müntzer? Why did the Zürich radicals write to him? _____

5. List the misgivings about Müntzer held by the Zürich radicals. _____

6. Why did the Zürich radicals think they could establish a meaningful relationship with Müntzer?

7. What reason really established the separatist movement? _____

8. What was the difference between the Second and Third Disputation? _____

9. What was the outcome of the Third Disputation? _____

10. Describe the events in the home of Felix Manz on the night of January 21, 1525. _____

11. What three things were the basis of the church formed by the Swiss Brethren? _____

12. When did immersion become the form of baptism for the Anabaptists? _____

13. What success did the Anabaptist evangelists have? _____

14. Why were Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock condemned? _____

15. Describe the death of Felix Manz. _____

16. What was the outcome of the Anabaptist movement? _____

17. What was the Roman Catholic view of the Mass? _____

18. What was Luther's view of the Lord's Supper? _____

19. What was Zwingli's view of the Lord's Supper? _____

20. What was the Marburg Colloquy? How did it end? _____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3). After reading Baker, pages 218-29, answer the following questions.

1. What two points of view does Baker give for the origin of the radical reformers?
2. Name and describe the types of radical reformers set forth by Baker. Give one example for each type.
3. List the Anabaptist viewpoints given by Baker that brought them in conflict with the traditional view of the Christian and the world.

Advanced activity (Level 3). Read Bainton, pages 95-109, and answer the following questions.

1. Compare the Anabaptist teaching on the church with the teaching of the church of which you are a member. Be careful to point out areas of similarity and differences. What influence do you think Anabaptist teachings have had on what you believe?
2. What do you think brought about the severe persecutions on the Anabaptists? What parallels can be drawn for today?

Seminar Discussion

1. Discuss the first, second, and third disputations held in the Rathaus in Zürich. How did these disputations contribute to the development of the Anabaptist movement?
2. Discuss the significant events in the development of the Anabaptist movement.
3. What was the outcome of the Anabaptist movement?
4. What was the purpose of the Marburg Colloquy?
5. Discuss the influence of Anabaptist teachings on evangelical beliefs held today.